INDRAJAL COMICS

NO.272

MAHABHARATA

PART-1

ES OF INDIA PUBLICATION

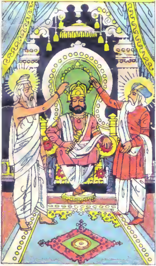




HASTINAPURA–THE GLORIOUS CAPITAL OF BHARATVANSHI KINGS, HAD ON ITS MAIN GATE TWO HUGE PILLARS, DEPICTING TWO ELEPHANTS OFFERING LOTUS FLOWERS TO THE GODDESS LAKSHMI. ON BOTH THE SIDES WERE TWO GRAND STATUES OF THE GANGA AND THE YAMUNA SIGNIFYING THE SITUATION OF THE CAPITAL BETWEEN THESE TWO RIVERS.

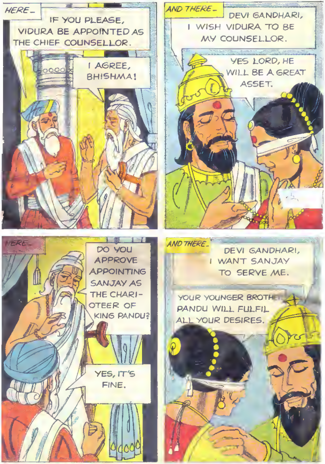
SCRIPT: NARENDRA SHARMA ILLUSTRATIONS: RAVI PARANJAPE

PANDU, THE KING OF HASTINAPURA HAD SPECIFIED THE FACT, BY BUILDING THE STATUES OF THE GANGA AND YAMUNA, THAT GANGEYA BHISHMA, SON OF GANGA AND VYASA DWAIPAYAN, BORN IN AN AISLE OF THE YAMUNA, WERE THEN THE MAIN CUSTODIANS OF THIS BHARAT KINGDOM. THEY PROCLAIMED MAHARAJ PANDU TO BE THE KING, AS DHRITARASHTRA, HIS ELDER BROTHER BEING BORN BLIND, WAS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR KINGSHIP.

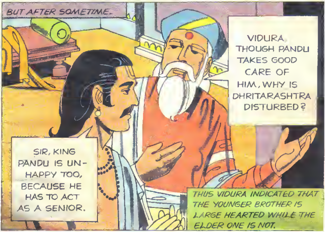




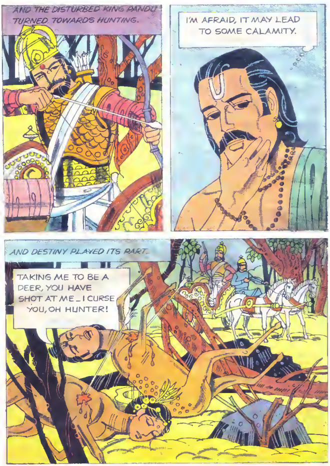
PANDU HAD DUE REGARD FOR HIS BROTHER DHRITARASHTRA AND SAME WAS THE CASE WITH BOTH HIS QUEENS KUNTI AND MADRI TOWARDS GANDHARI, THE DEVOTED WIFE OF DHRITARASHTRA. GANDHARI CHOSE TO REMAIN BLINDFOLDED ALL HER LIFE SINCE HER HUSBAND WAS BLIND. PLEASED BY HER DEVOTION, SAGE VYASA BLESSED HER TO BE THE MOTHER OF A HUNDRED SONS.


HERE–
IF YOU PLEASE, VIDURA BE APPOINTED AS THE CHIEF COUNSELLOR.
I AGREE, BHISHMA!
AND THERE–
DEVI GANDHARI, I WISH VIDURA TO BE MY COUNSELLOR.
YES LORD, HE WILL BE A GREAT ASSET.
HERE–
DO YOU APPROVE APPOINTING SANJAY AS THE CHARIOTEER OF KING PANDU?
YES, IT'S FINE.
AND THERE–
DEVI GANDHARI, I WANT SANJAY TO SERVE ME.
YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER PANDU WILL FULFIL ALL YOUR DESIRES.


TO HAVE YOU AS MY CHIEF COUNSELLOR IS INDEED NICE BUT I MUST TALK TO MY ELDER BROTHER.
SURE.
SANJAY, DOES DHRITARASHTRA WANT YOUR SERVICES?
IT'S TRUE, SIR.
IT'S MY DUTY TO FULFIL THE DESIRES OF MY ELDER BROTHER.
OH KING PANDU, YOU ARE A GREAT SOUL!
DEVI GANDHARI, DO YOU CONSIDER VIDURA TRUSTWORTHY?
YES, MY LORD, HE IS A WELL-WISHER OF BHARAT KINGDOM.

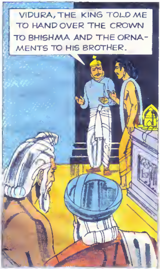

BUT AFTER SOMETIME.
VIDURA, THOUGH PANDU TAKES GOOD CARE OF HIM, WHY IS DHRITARASHTRA DISTURBED?
SIR, KING PANDU IS UNHAPPY TOO, BECAUSE HE HAS TO ACT AS A SENIOR.
THUS VIDURA INDICATED THAT THE YOUNGER BROTHER IS LARGE HEARTED WHILE THE ELDER ONE IS NOT.


VIDURA, ALWAYS ENDEAVOUR TO SEE THAT DOUBTFUL DHRITARASHTRA HAS NO MALICE TOWARDS KING PANDU.


AND THE DISTURBED KING PANDU TURNED TOWARDS HUNTING.
I'M AFRAID, IT MAY LEAD TO SOME CALAMITY.
AND DESTINY PLAYED ITS PART.
TAKING ME TO BE A DEER, YOU HAVE SHOT AT ME _ I CURSE YOU, OH HUNTER!

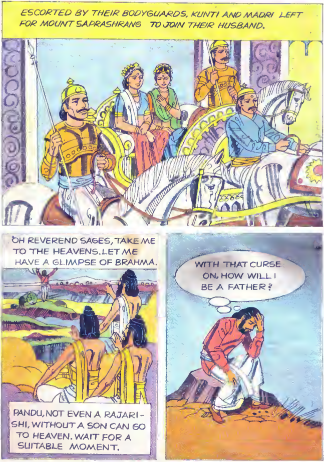

YOU WILL DIE AS YOU EMBRACE YOUR WIFE.
OH, WHAT HAVE I DONE! I WILL QUIT THE THRONE AND BECOME A HER-MIT.
IN THE PALACE.
WHY THIS ARATI IS TREMBLING IN MY HANDS?
WHY MY WHOLE BODY IS TREMBLING, KUNTI?
BEWARE KUNTI AND MADRI. TIME WILL TEST YOU. BE COURAGEOUS.
LORD, I AM TERRIBLY UPSET.


I SEE THROUGH YOGA-POWER, THAT YOUR HUSBAND PANDU IS ENTERING A HERMIT'S LIFE.
BUT AS A WIFE, CAN'T I STILL LIVE WITH HIM?
SIR, THE KING HAS SHED AWAY THE CROWN AND HAS BECOME A HERMIT.
HOW DID IT HAPPEN ?
STRANGE ARE THE WAYS OF DESTINY, BHISHMA.
WHAT WAS THE KING'S ORDER REGARDING THE CROWN AND ORNA-MENTS ?

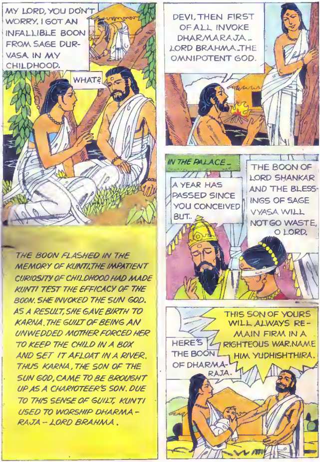

VIDURA, THE KING TOLD ME TO HAND OVER THE CROWN TO BHISHMA AND THE ORNAMENTS TO HIS BROTHER.

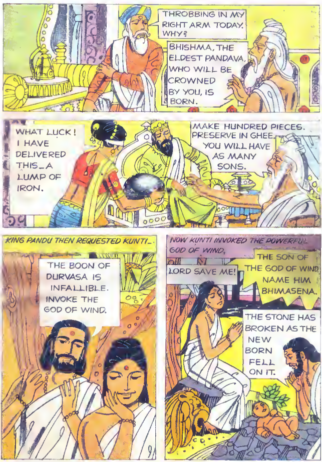

WHAT DO I HEAR? KING PANDU HAS BECOME A HERMIT?
KUNTI AND MADRI TOO ARE LEAVING FOR THE HIMALAYAS.


BHISHMA, DON'T WORRY. THE COMPANY OF THE HERMITS WILL BRIGHTEN PANDU'S FUTURE.



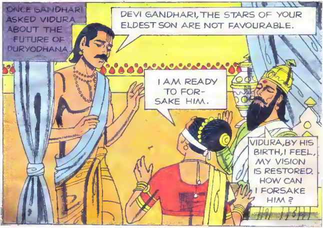
ESCORTED BY THEIR BODYGUARDS, KUNTI AND MADRI LEFT FOR MOUNT SAPRASHRANG TO JOIN THEIR HUSBAND.
OH REVEREND SAGES, TAKE ME TO THE HEAVENS. LET ME HAVE A GLIMPSE OF BRAHMA.
PANDU, NOT EVEN A RAJARISHI, WITHOUT A SON CAN GO TO HEAVEN. WAIT FOR A SUITABLE MOMENT.
WITH THAT CURSE ON, HOW WILL I BE A FATHER?

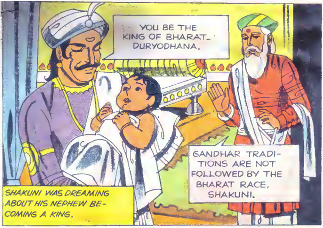

MY LORD, YOU DON'T WORRY. I GOT AN INFALLIBLE BOON FROM SAGE DURVASA IN MY CHILDHOOD.
WHAT?
THE BOON FLASHED IN THE MEMORY OF KUNTI. THE IMPATIENT CURIOSITY OF CHILDHOOD HAD MADE KUNTI TEST THE EFFICACY OF THE BOON. SHE INVOKED THE SUN GOD. AS A RESULT, SHE GAVE BIRTH TO KARNA. THE GUILT OF BEING AN UNWEDDED MOTHER FORCED HER TO KEEP THE CHILD IN A BOX AND SET IT AFLOAT IN A RIVER. THUS KARNA, THE SON OF THE SUN GOD, CAME TO BE BROUGHT UP AS A CHARIOTEER'S SON. DUE TO THIS SENSE OF GUILT, KUNTI USED TO WORSHIP DHARMARAJA – LORD BRAHMA.
DEVI, THEN FIRST OF ALL INVOKE DHARMARAJA – LORD BRAHMA – THE OMNIPOTENT GOD.
IN THE PALACE –
A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE YOU CONCEIVED BUT..
THE BOON OF LORD SHANKAR AND THE BLESSINGS OF SAGE VYASA WILL NOT GO WASTE, O LORD.
HERE'S THE BOON OF DHARMARAJA.
THIS SON OF YOURS WILL ALWAYS REMAIN FIRM IN A RIGHTEOUS WAR. NAME HIM YUDHISHTHIRA.


THROBBING IN MY RIGHT ARM TODAY. WHY?
BHISHMA, THE ELDEST PANDAVA, WHO WILL BE CROWNED BY YOU, IS BORN.
WHAT LUCK! I HAVE DELIVERED THIS_A LUMP OF IRON.
MAKE HUNDRED PIECES. PRESERVE IN GHEE. YOU WILL HAVE AS MANY SONS.
KING PANDU THEN REQUESTED KUNTI_
THE BOON OF DURVASA IS INFALLIBLE. INVOKE THE GOD OF WIND.
NOW KUNTI INVOKED THE POWERFUL GOD OF WIND.
LORD SAVE ME!
THE SON OF THE GOD OF WIND. NAME HIM BHIMASENA.
THE STONE HAS BROKEN AS THE NEW BORN FELL ON IT.

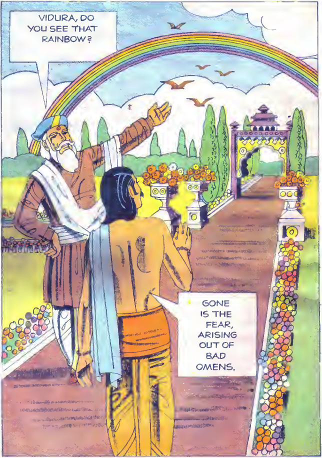

YUDHISHTHIRA MUST BE ONE YEAR OLD NOW. WHEN WILL I TAKE HIM IN MY LAP?
VIDURA TOO BECAME A FATHER.
O, KING, I AM BLESSED WITH A SON.
NAME HIM YUYUTSU, VIDURA.
HAIL O KING!
WHO? OH DEAR GANDH-ARRAJ SHAKUNI!
MEANWHILE GANDHARI'S BROTHER SHAKUNI CAME.
I HAVE COME AT AN AUSPI-CIOUS MOMENT. YOU WILL BE BLESSED WITH ONE HUNDRED SONS.


AND THEN VIDURA SAW BAD OMENS.
BHIMASENA WAS BORN THERE AND DURYODHANA HERE. STRANGE ARE YOUR WAYS, OH GOD!
I DREAMT THAT A SON WILL BE BORN BY THE BLESSINGS OF INDRA.
NAME HIM ARJUNA. HE WILL BRING GLORY TO THE BHARAT RACE.
BROTHER BALARAMA, THE TIME HAS COME TO LEAVE THIS PLEASURE LAND OF BRAJA AND GO TO THE PLACE OF ACTION.
KRISHNA, YOU MEAN NARA, THE FRIEND OF NARAYANA WILL BE BORN?

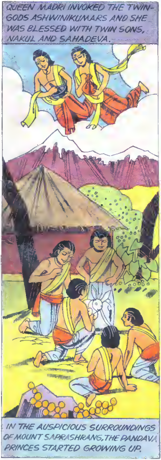

ONCE GANDHARI ASKED VIDURA ABOUT THE FUTURE OF DURYODHANA.
DEVI GANDHARI, THE STARS OF YOUR ELDEST SON ARE NOT FAVOURABLE.
I AM READY TO FORSAKE HIM.
VIDURA, BY HIS BIRTH, I FEEL, MY VISION IS RESTORED. HOW CAN I FORSAKE HIM ?


YOU BE THE KING OF BHARAT_ DURYODHANA.
GANDHAR TRADITIONS ARE NOT FOLLOWED BY THE BHARAT RACE, SHAKUNI.
SHAKUNI WAS DREAMING ABOUT HIS NEPHEW BECOMING A KING.

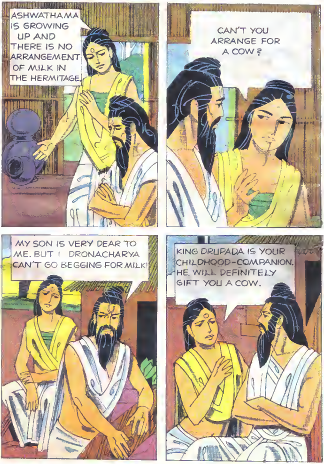

SIR, THANK GOD, MY NEPHEW IS NOT A BORN BLIND.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, SHAKUNI?
NO ONE'S SISTER WILL HAVE TO REMAIN BLINDFOLDED IN ORDER TO BE THE WIFE OF MY NEPHEW.
I DON'T LIKE THE PRESENCE OF MY BROTHER HERE.
SHAKUNI IS SO KIND TO MY SON. LET HIM STAY HERE.
MY BROTHER IS FIRED WITH THE FEELING OF REVENGE.
JUST BECAUSE HIS SISTER HAPPENS TO BE THE WIFE OF A BORN-BLIND?


VIDURA, DO YOU SEE THAT RAINBOW?
GONE IS THE FEAR, ARISING OUT OF BAD OMENS.


WHILE ON MOUNT SAPRASHRANG...
KUNTI, PASS ON THIS INCANTATION TO MADRI TOO. BLESS HER MOTHERHOOD.
AS YOU WISH!

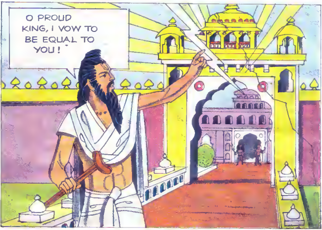

QUEEN MADRI INVOKED THE TWIN-GODS ASHWINIKUMARS AND SHE WAS BLESSED WITH TWIN SONS, NAKUL AND SAHADEVA.
IN THE AUSPICIOUS SURROUNDINGS OF MOUNT SAPRASHRANG, THE PANDAVA PRINCES STARTED GROWING UP.

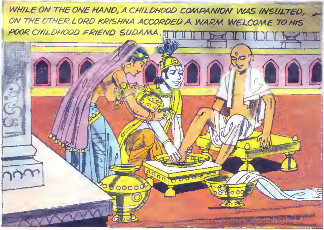

DRONACHARYA WITH HIS WIFE KRAPI AND SON ASHWATHAMA WAS RESIDING IN HIS HERMITAGE IN DRONA, IN DOON VALLEY.



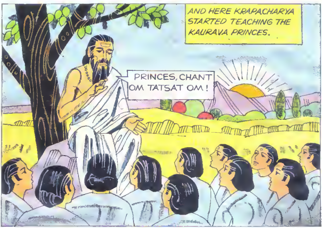
ASHWATHAMA IS GROWING UP AND THERE IS NO ARRANGEMENT OF MILK IN THE HERMITAGE.
CAN'T YOU ARRANGE FOR A COW?
MY SON IS VERY DEAR TO ME. BUT I DRONACHARYA CAN'T GO BEGGING FOR MILK!
KING DRUPADA IS YOUR CHILDHOOD-COMPANION. HE WILL DEFINITELY GIFT YOU A COW.

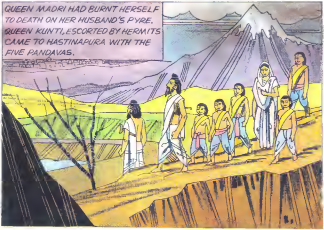

KING DRUPADA ENQUIRED_
WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE BRAHMIN AT THE GATE?
WHAT? THAT DRONACHARYA CALLS ME HIS CHILDHOOD-COMPANION?
TELL HIM, ONLY MEN OF EQUAL STATUS CAN BE FRIENDS!

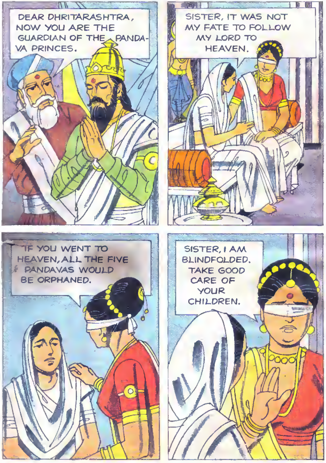

O PROUD KING, I VOW TO BE EQUAL TO YOU !


WHILE ON THE ONE HAND, A CHILDHOOD COMPANION WAS INSULTED, ON THE OTHER, LORD KRISHNA ACCORDED A WARM WELCOME TO HIS POOR CHILDHOOD FRIEND SUDAMA.


VYASA, I AM APPREHENDING SOME CALAMITY.
YOU ARE RIGHT. KING PANDU HAS EXPIRED!

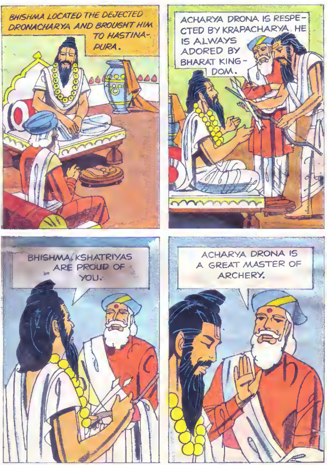

AND HERE KRAPACHARYA STARTED TEACHING THE KAURAVA PRINCES.
PRINCES, CHANT OM TATSAT OM !

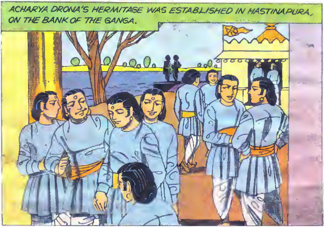

QUEEN MADRI HAD BURNT HERSELF TO DEATH ON HER HUSBAND'S PYRE. QUEEN KUNTI, ESCORTED BY HERMITS CAME TO HASTINAPURA WITH THE FIVE PANDAVAS.

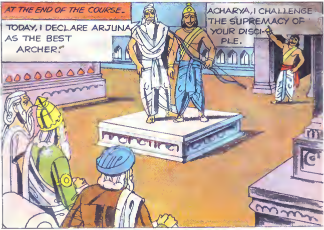


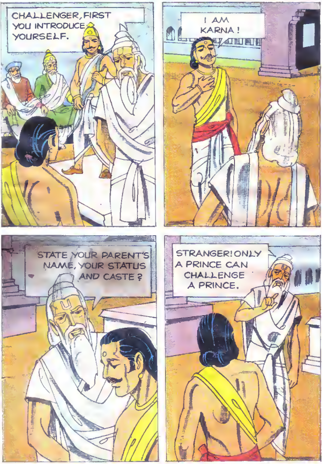
DEAR DHRITARASHTRA, NOW YOU ARE THE GUARDIAN OF THE PANDAVA PRINCES.
SISTER, IT WAS NOT MY FATE TO FOLLOW MY LORD TO HEAVEN.
IF YOU WENT TO HEAVEN, ALL THE FIVE PANDAVAS WOULD BE ORPHANED.
SISTER, I AM BLINDFOLDED. TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR CHILDREN.

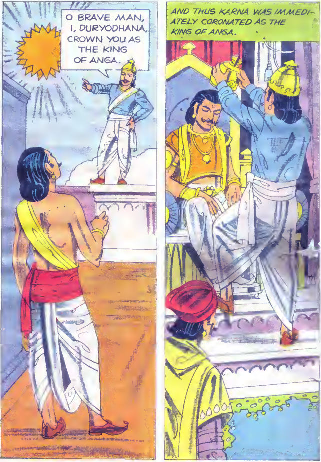

WHAT DO THE CITIZENS ASK IN THEIR LETTER, VIDURA?
THEY REQUEST YOU TO DECLARE THE ELDEST PANDAVA - YUDHISHTHIRA AS THE CROWN PRINCE.
AGREED THAT YUDHISHTHIRA IS ELDER TO DURYODHANA...
SHAKUNI WAS SPREADING HIS DRAGNET
... BUT DHRITARASHTRA WAS ALSO ELDER TO PANDU, SISTER!
BROTHER SHAKUNI, DON'T CREATE ENMITY IN BHARAT KINGDOM!


BHISHMA LOCATED THE DEJECTED DRONACHARYA AND BROUGHT HIM TO HASTINA-PURA.
ACHARYA DRONA IS RESPE-CTED BY KRAPACHARYA. HE IS ALWAYS ADORED BY BHARAT KING-DOM.
BHISHMA, KSHATRIYAS ARE PROUD OF YOU.
ACHARYA DRONA IS A GREAT MASTER OF ARCHERY.

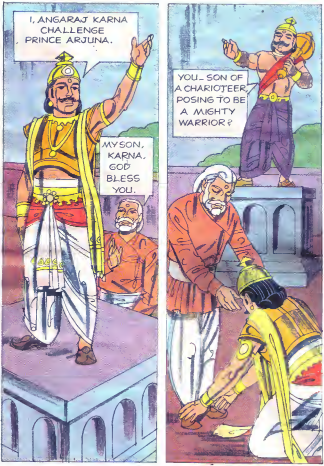

ACHARYA DRONA'S HERMITAGE WAS ESTABLISHED IN HASTINAPURA, ON THE BANK OF THE GANGA.

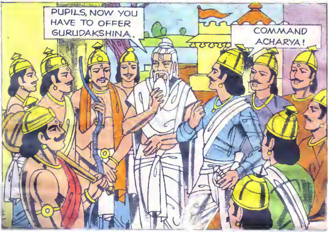

AT THE END OF THE COURSE...
TODAY, I DECLARE ARJUNA AS THE BEST ARCHER.
ACHARYA, I CHALLENGE THE SUPREMACY OF YOUR DISCIPLE.

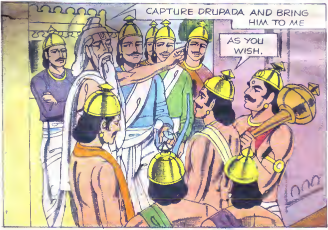

CHALLENGER, FIRST YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF.
I AM KARNA!
STATE YOUR PARENT'S NAME, YOUR STATUS AND CASTE ?
STRANGER! ONLY A PRINCE CAN CHALLENGE A PRINCE.

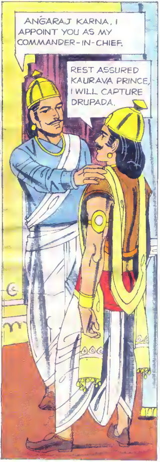

O BRAVE MAN, I, DURYODHANA, CROWN YOU AS THE KING OF ANGA.
AND THUS KARNA WAS IMMEDIATELY CORONATED AS THE KING OF ANGA.


CONGRATULATIONS ADHIRATHA, YOUR SON HAS BECOME A KING.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, SANJAY?
GO AND SEE THE GRANDEUR OF KARNA, THE KING OF ANGA.
LET US GO.

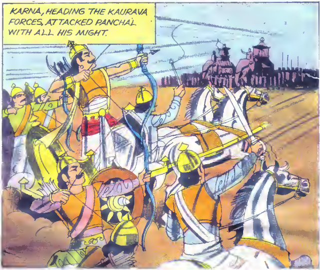

I, ANGARAJ KARNA CHALLENGE PRINCE ARJUNA.
MY SON, KARNA, GOD BLESS YOU.
YOU_ SON OF A CHARIOTEER, POSING TO BE A MIGHTY WARRIOR?


PUPILS, NOW YOU HAVE TO OFFER GURUDAKSHINA.
COMMAND ACHARYA!

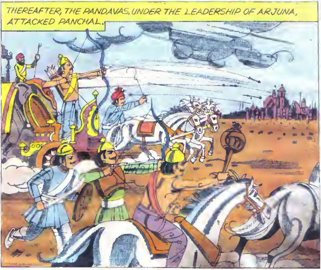

CAPTURE DRUPADA AND BRING HIM TO ME
AS YOU WISH.


ANGARAJ KARNA, I APPOINT YOU AS MY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.
REST ASSURED KAURAVA PRINCE, I WILL CAPTURE DRUPADA.


LET HIM ATTACK FIRST, ARJUNA.
AS YOU ADVISE, DHARMARAJA.

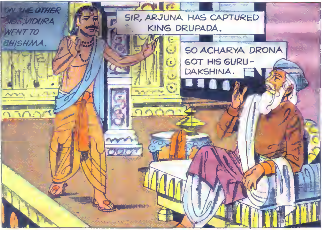

KARNA, HEADING THE KAURAVA FORCES, ATTACKED PANCHAL WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.

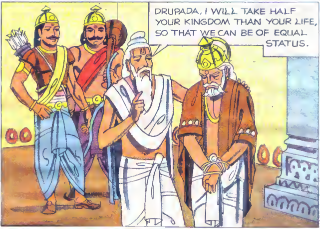

THE FORCES OF PANCHALA STOOD FIRM AGAINST THIS ONSLAUGHT. KARNA WAS ULTIMATELY PUSHED BACK.


THEREAFTER, THE PANDAVAS, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ARJUNA, ATTACKED PANCHAL.

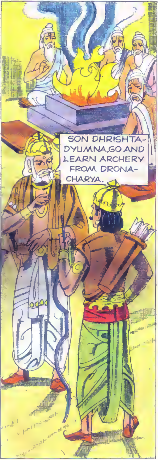

THE ARMY OF DRUPADA COULD NOT STAND THE FURY OF ARJUNA'S ARCHERY. PANDAVAS WON THE BATTLE.

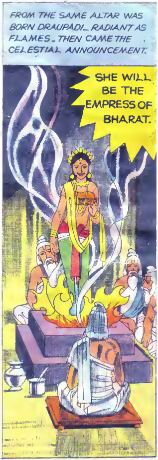

SANJAY WAS NARRATING THE WAR DEVELOPMENTS TO DHRITARASHTRA.
O KING, COMMANDER KARNA HAS BEEN DEFEATED. YOUR SON IS WOUNDED.
AND ARJUNA?

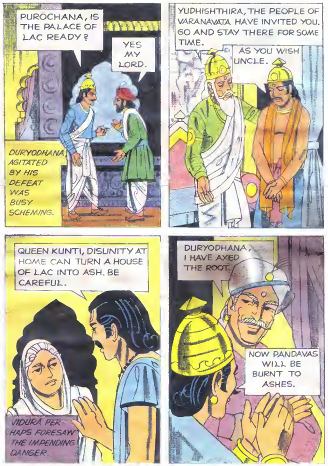

ON THE OTHER SIDE, VIDURA WENT TO BHISHMA.
SIR, ARJUNA HAS CAPTURED KING DRUPADA.
SO ACHARYA DRONA GOT HIS GURU-DAKSHINA.


DRUPADA, I WILL TAKE HALF YOUR KINGDOM THAN YOUR LIFE, SO THAT WE CAN BE OF EQUAL STATUS.


DRUPADA PERFORMED A YAGNA TO AVENGE HIS HUMILIATION. FROM THE ALTAR WAS BORN A WARRIOR WITH FULL ARMOUR AND CROWN.
THIS DHRISHTA-DYUMNA WILL KILL THE ACHARYA.


SON DHRISHTA-DYUMNA,GO AND LEARN ARCHERY FROM DRONA-CHARYA.

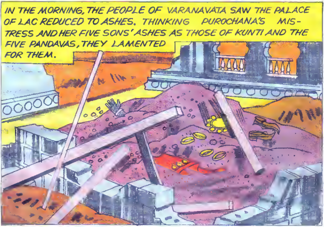

FROM THE SAME ALTAR WAS BORN DRAUPADI_ RADIANT AS FLAMES_ THEN CAME THE CELESTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.
SHE WILL BE THE EMPRESS OF BHARAT.


PUROCHANA, IS THE PALACE OF LAC READY ?
YES MY LORD.
DURYODHANA AGITATED BY HIS DEFEAT WAS BUSY SCHEMING.
YUDHISHTHIRA, THE PEOPLE OF VARANAVATA HAVE INVITED YOU. GO AND STAY THERE FOR SOME TIME.
AS YOU WISH UNCLE.
QUEEN KUNTI, DISUNITY AT HOME CAN TURN A HOUSE OF LAC INTO ASH. BE CAREFUL.
VIDURA PERHAPS FORESAW THE IMPENDING DANGER.
DURYODHANA, I HAVE AXED THE ROOT.
NOW PANDAVAS WILL BE BURNT TO ASHES.


ATTENDANT PUROCHANA WEL-COMES YOU.
GOD BLESS YOU.


SIR, AS ASKED BY VIDURA, I HAVE PREPARED A TUNNEL!
GOD BLESS YOU

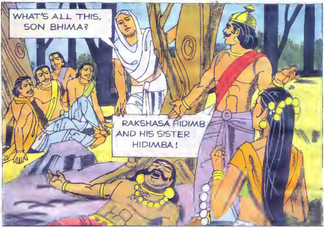

AND ONE NIGHT WHEN PUROCHANA, WITH HIS MISTRESS AND HER FIVE SONS WAS LYING DRUNK, ALL THE FIVE PANDAVAS WITH THEIR MOTHER KUNTI, HURRIED OUT THROUGH THE TUNNEL. BHIMA HAD SET FIRE TO THE PALACE OF LAC AND NOW THEY WERE WATCHING IT BURNING.
BHIMA, WE HAVE NO TIME TO SEE THIS FUN. LET US GO.
ARJUNA, THE SPIES OF DURYODHANA MAY FOLLOW US.

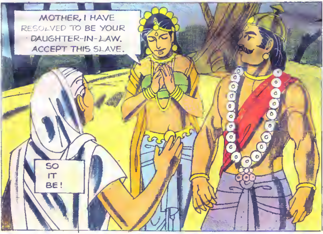

IN THE MORNING, THE PEOPLE OF VARANAVATA SAW THE PALACE OF LAC REDUCED TO ASHES. THINKING PUROCHANA'S MISTRESS AND HER FIVE SONS' ASHES AS THOSE OF KUNTI AND THE FIVE PANDAVAS, THEY LAMENTED FOR THEM.

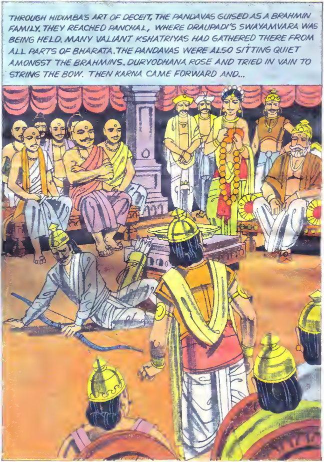

WHILE MOTHER KUNTI AND THE FOUR PANDAVAS WERE FAST ASLEEP IN THE DENSE FOREST, BHIMA WAS KEEPING THE VIGIL. HE WAS SORRY AT THE PLIGHT OF THE QUEEN. MOTHER AND PRINCE-BROTHERS.

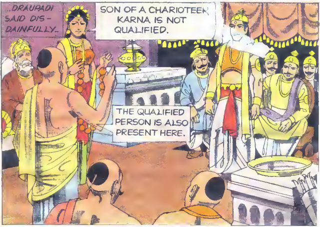

AND NEARBY...
SISTER HIDIMBA, I AM SMELLING A HUMAN BEING.
EVEN THE LEFT PARTS OF MY BODY ARE THROBBING, BROTHER HIDIMB.
THEN BE READY AND GO. KILL YOUR PREY.
OH, I HAVE THROBBING IN MY LEFT EYE TOO.

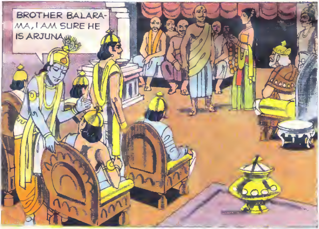

ACCEPT MY GARLAND OH ARYAPUTRA.
WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME IS HIDIMBA, MY BROTHER HIDIMB...
YES, I'M HIDIMB, AN OGRE.
I WILL KILL YOU, O RAKSHASA

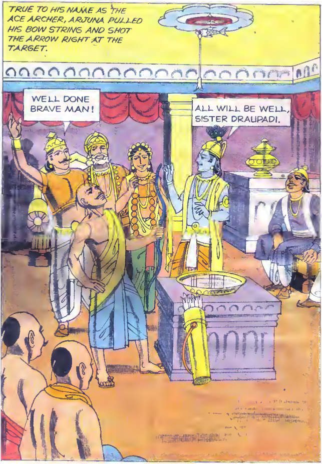

WHAT'S ALL THIS, SON BHIMA?
RAKSHASA HIDIMB AND HIS SISTER HIDIMBA!


MOTHER, I HAVE RESOLVED TO BE YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. ACCEPT THIS SLAVE.
SO IT BE!

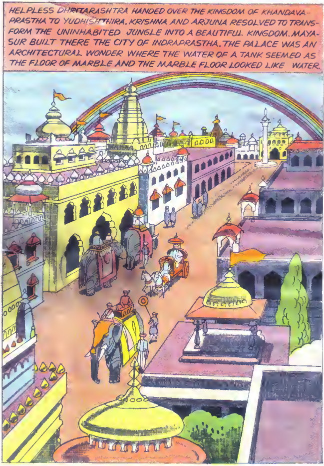

THROUGH HIDIMBA'S ART OF DECEIT, THE PANDAVAS GUISED AS A BRAHMIN FAMILY. THEY REACHED PANCHAL, WHERE DRAUPADI'S SWAYAMVARA WAS BEING HELD. MANY VALIANT KSHATRIYAS HAD GATHERED THERE FROM ALL PARTS OF BHARATA. THE PANDAVAS WERE ALSO SITTING QUIET AMONGST THE BRAHMINS. DURYODHANA ROSE AND TRIED IN VAIN TO STRING THE BOW. THEN KARNA CAME FORWARD AND...

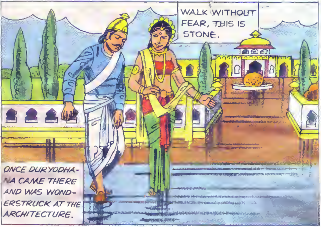

...DRAUPADI SAID DIS-DAINFULLY...
SON OF A CHARIOTEER KARNA IS NOT QUALIFIED.
THE QUALIFIED PERSON IS ALSO PRESENT HERE.


BROTHER BALARAMA, I AM SURE HE IS ARJUNA.


TRUE TO HIS NAME AS THE ACE ARCHER, ARJUNA PULLED HIS BOW STRING AND SHOT THE ARROW RIGHT AT THE TARGET.
WELL DONE BRAVE MAN!
ALL WILL BE WELL, SISTER DRAUPADI.


BHISHMA, THE FUTURE EMPRESS OF BHARAT HAS BECOME THE PANDAVA BRIDE.
DEAR PANDAVAS ARE ALIVE!
DEVI GANDHARI, THE PANDAVAS ARE ALIVE!
GIVE THEM HALF OF THE KINGDOM, MY LORD.
VIDURA, LOOK-THE BRIDE OF ALL THE FIVE PANDAVAS.
YES SANJAY, THE VITAL FORCE TO UNITE THE FIVE GREAT ELEMENTS!
THE PANDAVAS ARE TIED LIKE A FIST, SHAKUNI.
KARNA, I WILL SEE TO IT THAT THEY DO NOT REMAIN UNITED FOR LONG.

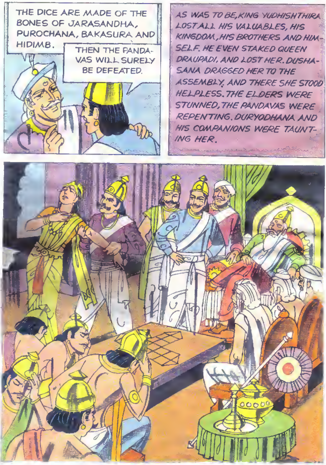

HELPLESS DHRITARASHTRA HANDED OVER THE KINGDOM OF KHANDAVA-PRASTHA TO YUDHISHTHIRA. KRISHNA AND ARJUNA RESOLVED TO TRANSFORM THE UNINHABITED JUNGLE INTO A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM. MAYASUR BUILT THERE THE CITY OF INDRAPRASTHA. THE PALACE WAS AN ARCHITECTURAL WONDER WHERE THE WATER OF A TANK SEEMED AS THE FLOOR OF MARBLE AND THE MARBLE FLOOR LOOKED LIKE WATER.


WALK WITHOUT FEAR, THIS IS STONE.
ONCE DURYODHANA CAME THERE AND WAS WONDERSTRUCK AT THE ARCHITECTURE.


YOU MISTOOK WATER TO BE STONE. YOU REMAINED BLIND AFTER ALL ?!

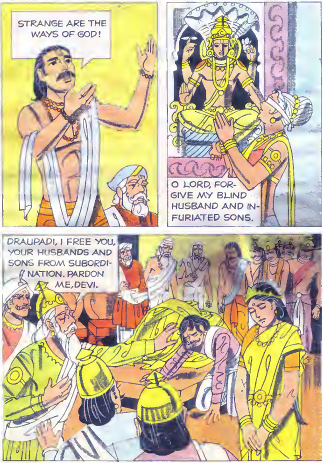

AFTER ESTABLISHING THE KINGDOM, YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED RAJASUYA YAGNA.
RAJASUYA YAGNA IS OVER, VICTORY TO KING YUDHISHTHIRA!
VICTORY TO DHARMARAJA YUDHISHTHIRA!

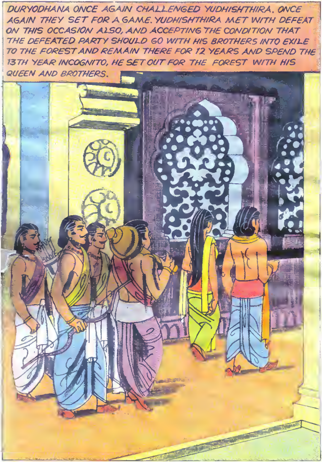

THE GROWING PROSPERITY OF PANDAVAS WAS UNBEARABLE TO DURYODHANA. HE WAS BURNING WITH JEALOUSY AND STARTED HATCHING PLOTS TO DESTROY THE PANDAVAS. SHAKUNI ADDED FUEL TO THE FIRE.
DURYODHANA, INVITE YUDHISHTHIRA TO HASTINAPURA.
WHY?
WE SHALL ARRANGE A GAME OF DICE THERE.


THE DICE ARE MADE OF THE BONES OF JARASANDHA, PUROCHANA, BAKASURA AND HIDIMB.
THEN THE PANDAVAS WILL SURELY BE DEFEATED.
AS WAS TO BE, KING YUDHISHTHIRA LOST ALL HIS VALUABLES, HIS KINGDOM, HIS BROTHERS AND HIMSELF. HE EVEN STAKED QUEEN DRAUPADI, AND LOST HER. DUSHASANA DRAGGED HER TO THE ASSEMBLY. AND THERE SHE STOOD HELPLESS. THE ELDERS WERE STUNNED, THE PANDAVAS WERE REPENTING. DURYODHANA AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE TAUNTING HER.


DRAUPADI, NOW YOU ARE OUR SLAVE.
LEAVE YOUR HUSBANDS, THE DEFEATED GAMBLERS AND MARRY SOMEONE ELSE.
STRIP OFF HER GARMENTS DUSHASANA
HUMILIATED AND HELPLESS, DRAUPADI STOOD STILL.


DUSHASANA STARTED THE SHAMEFUL WORK. IN THE ANGUISH OF UTTER HELPLESSNESS, DRAUPADI IMPLORED FOR DIVINE MERCY. LORD KRISHNA CAME TO HER RESCUE AND AS DUSHASANA PULLED OFF EACH, EVER FRESH GARMENTS WERE SEEN TO CLOTHE HER BODY.

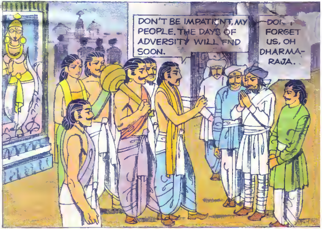

STRANGE ARE THE WAYS OF GOD!
O LORD, FORGIVE MY BLIND HUSBAND AND INFURIATED SONS.
DRAUPADI, I FREE YOU, YOUR HUSBANDS AND SONS FROM SUBORDINATION. PARDON ME, DEVI.

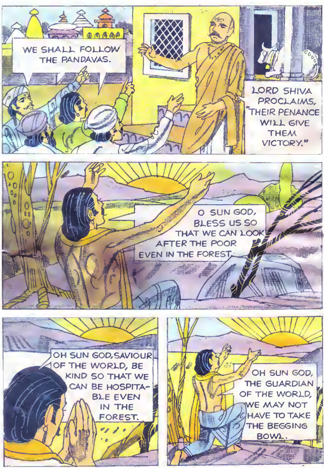

DURYODHANA ONCE AGAIN CHALLENGED YUDHISHTHIRA. ONCE AGAIN THEY SET FOR A GAME. YUDHISHTHIRA MET WITH DEFEAT ON THIS OCCASION ALSO, AND ACCEPTING THE CONDITION THAT THE DEFEATED PARTY SHOULD GO WITH HIS BROTHERS INTO EXILE TO THE FOREST AND REMAIN THERE FOR 12 YEARS AND SPEND THE 13TH YEAR INCOGNITO, HE SET OUT FOR THE FOREST WITH HIS QUEEN AND BROTHERS.

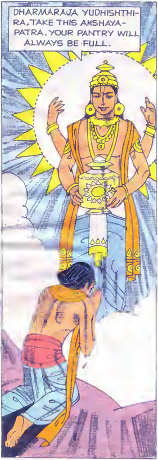

MOTHER KUNTI, WHILE BIDDING FAREWELL TO DRAUPADI, TOLD HER_
DRAUPADI, TAKE CARE OF SAHADEVA. HE IS VERY SHY.
VIDURA, THE FIVE SONS OF DRAUPADI SHOULD GO TO THEIR MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S PLACE AND SUBHADRA WITH ABHIMANYU CAN STAY AT DWARAKA.


THE NEWS OF THEIR EXILE SPREAD LIKE WILD-FIRE AND EVERYBODY WAS STUNNED.
THE TRICKERY OF SHAKUNI AND EXILE TO DHARMARAJA!
O LORD SHIVA, WHAT IS THIS IN-JUSTICE GOING ON IN HASTINA-PURA?
O, HONOURABLE MINISTER, SHOULD WE BEAR THIS INJUSTICE OF THE COURT?


O KING, THE PEOPLE OF HASTINAPURA ARE GETTING RESTLESS.


DON'T BE IMPATIENT, MY PEOPLE. THE DAYS OF ADVERSITY WILL END SOON.
DO… FORGET US, OH DHARMA-RAJA.

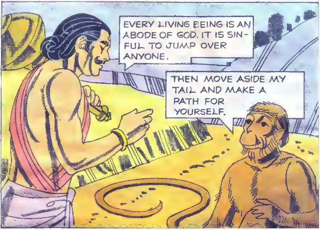

WE SHALL FOLLOW THE PANDAVAS.
LORD SHIVA PROCLAIMS, "THEIR PENANCE WILL GIVE THEM VICTORY."
O SUN GOD, BLESS US SO THAT WE CAN LOOK AFTER THE POOR EVEN IN THE FOREST.
OH SUN GOD, SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, BE KIND SO THAT WE CAN BE HOSPITA-BLE EVEN IN THE FOREST.
OH SUN GOD, THE GUARDIAN OF THE WORLD, WE MAY NOT HAVE TO TAKE THE BEGGING BOWL.

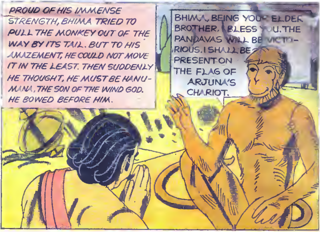

DHARMARAJA YUDHISHTHIRA, TAKE THIS AKSHAYAPATRA. YOUR PANTRY WILL ALWAYS BE FULL.


ARJUNA INVOKED LORD SHIVA.
OH FRIEND OF LORD KRISHNA, TAKE THIS PASUPATA WEAPON, USE IT ONLY IN A RIGHTEOUS WAR.


MEANWHILE MATALI, THE CHARIOTEER OF LORD INDRA ARRIVES. .
OH BRAVE ARJUNA, LORD OF HEAVEN, INDRA HAS CALLED YOU.
I AM HONOURED, MATALI, THE DIVINE CHARIOTEER.


ONCE DURING THE EXILE WHILE BHIMA WAS STROLLING AT THE FOOT OF THE HIMALAYAS, HE FOUND A MONKEY BLOCKING HIS WAY.
O MONKEY, GET AWAY FROM MY WAY !
I AM OLD AND HAVE NO STRENGTH TO STAND UP. YOU MAY JUMP OVER ME.

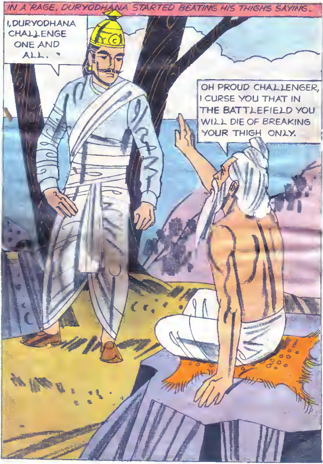

EVERY LIVING BEING IS AN ABODE OF GOD. IT IS SINFUL TO JUMP OVER ANYONE.
THEN MOVE ASIDE MY TAIL AND MAKE A PATH FOR YOURSELF.

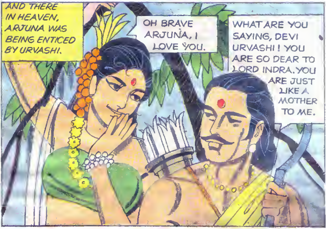

PROUD OF HIS IMMENSE STRENGTH, BHIMA TRIED TO PULL THE MONKEY OUT OF THE WAY BY ITS TAIL. BUT TO HIS AMAZEMENT, HE COULD NOT MOVE IT IN THE LEAST. THEN SUDDENLY HE THOUGHT, HE MUST BE HANUMANA, THE SON OF THE WIND GOD. HE BOWED BEFORE HIM.
BHIMA, BEING YOUR ELDER BROTHER, I BLESS YOU. THE PANDAVAS WILL BE VICTORIOUS. I SHALL BE PRESENT ON THE FLAG OF ARJUNA'S CHARIOT.

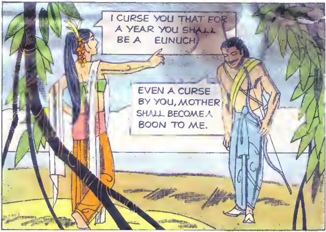

ROAMING IN THE JUNGLES, THE PANDAVAS THEN REACHED THE HERMITAGE OF SAGE MAITREYA.
YUDHISHTHIRA SALUTES SAGE MAITREYA.
VICTORY TO DHARMA-RAJA.
DHARMARAJA, IT PAINS ME TO THINK OF THE TERRIBLE HUMAN MASSACRE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I KNOW YOU NEVER THINK IN TERMS OF REVENGE, BUT DURYODHANA IS PREJUDICED.

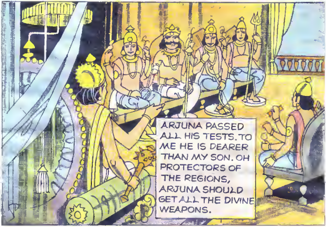

MEANWHILE DURYODHANA WAS SCHEMING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HELPLESS STATE OF THE PANDAVAS...
ANGARAJ KARNA, UNCLE SHAKUNI, BROTHER DUSHASANA, WHY DON'T WE ATTACK THE PANDAVAS NOW ONLY?
BETTER TO FINISH THEM ONCE AND FOR ALL.

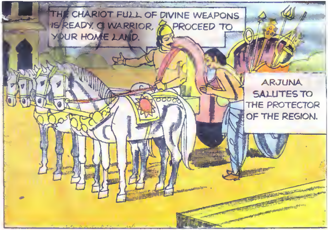

ACCORDINGLY WHEN DURYODHANA WENT IN PERSUIT OF THE PANDAVAS, SAGE MAITREYA TRIED TO REASON OUT.
DON'T RUIN YOUR RACE DURYODHANA. DHARMARAJA IS GENEROUS. COMPROMISE WITH HIM.
DURYODHANA KNOWS ONLY ONE DHARMA AND THAT IS THE DHARMA OF A SOVEREIGN KING AND IT ONLY PREACHES VALIANCE.


IN A RAGE, DURYODHANA STARTED BEATING HIS THIGHS SAYING.
I, DURYODHANA CHALLENGE ONE AND ALL.
OH PROUD CHALLENGER, I CURSE YOU THAT IN THE BATTLEFIELD YOU WILL DIE OF BREAKING YOUR THIGH ONLY.

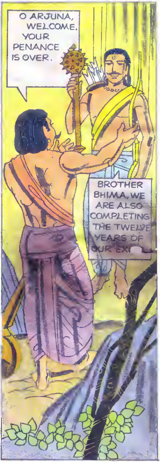

AND THERE IN HEAVEN, ARJUNA WAS BEING ENTICED BY URVASHI.
OH BRAVE ARJUNA, I LOVE YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, DEVI URVASHI ! YOU ARE SO DEAR TO LORD INDRA. YOU ARE JUST LIKE A MOTHER TO ME.

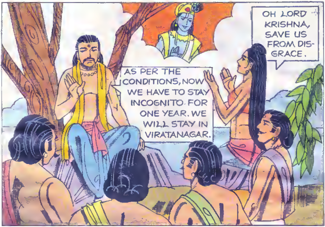

I CURSE YOU THAT FOR A YEAR YOU SHALL BE A EUNUCH.
EVEN A CURSE BY YOU, MOTHER SHALL BECOME A BOON TO ME.

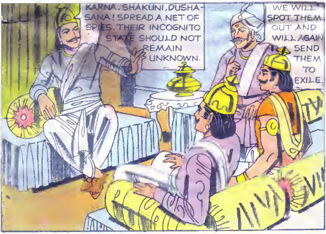

ARJUNA PASSED ALL HIS TESTS. TO ME HE IS DEARER THAN MY SON. OH PROTECTORS OF THE REGIONS, ARJUNA SHOULD GET ALL THE DIVINE WEAPONS.


THE CHARIOT FULL OF DIVINE WEAPONS IS READY. O WARRIOR, PROCEED TO YOUR HOME LAND.
ARJUNA SALUTES TO THE PROTECTOR OF THE REGION.

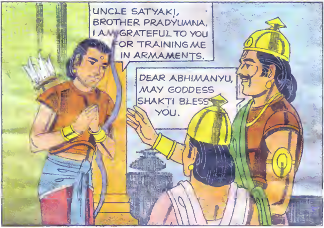

THE MOUNTAINS SHINE AND ALL THE DIRECTIONS RESOUND WITH HEAVENLY HARMONIES.
IT SEEMS YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER IS RETURNING.

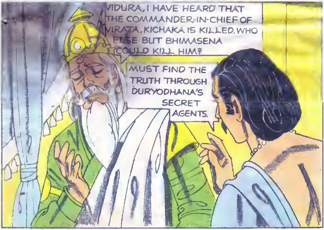

O ARJUNA, WELCOME. YOUR PENANCE IS OVER.
BROTHER BHIMA, WE ARE ALSO COMPLETING THE TWELVE YEARS OF OUR EX

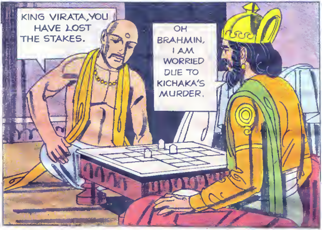

AS PER THE CONDITIONS, NOW WE HAVE TO STAY INCOGNITO FOR ONE YEAR. WE WILL STAY IN VIRATANAGAR.
OH LORD KRISHNA, SAVE US FROM DISGRACE.

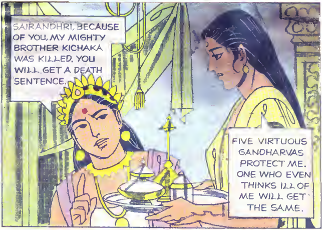

KARNA, SHAKUNI, DUSHASANA! SPREAD A NET OF SPIES. THEIR INCOGNITO STATE SHOULD NOT REMAIN UNKNOWN.
WE WILL SPOT THEM OUT AND WILL AGAIN SEND THEM TO EXILE.

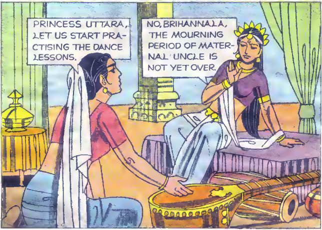

WHERE HAVE THE PANDAVAS DISAPPEARED?
SISTER SUBHADRA, WHERE IS ABHI-MANYU?
HE IS ALL THE TIME PRACTISING WITH ARMS.
BHISHMA HAS CALLED ABHI-MANYU TO HASTINAPURA ON THE OCCASION OF VIJAYA-DASHMI.


UNCLE SATYAKI, BROTHER PRADYUMNA, I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR TRAINING ME IN ARMAMENTS.
DEAR ABHIMANYU, MAY GODDESS SHAKTI BLESS YOU.

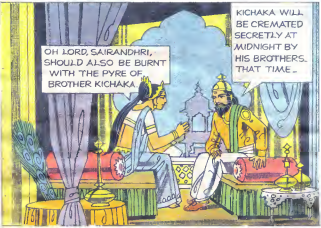

VIDURA, I HAVE HEARD THAT THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF VIRATA, KICHAKA IS KILLED. WHO ELSE BUT BHIMASENA COULD KILL HIM?
MUST FIND THE TRUTH THROUGH DURYODHANA'S SECRET AGENTS.


KING VIRATA, YOU HAVE LOST THE STAKES.
OH BRAHMIN, I AM WORRIED DUE TO KICHAKA'S MURDER.


SAIRANDHRI, BECAUSE OF YOU, MY MIGHTY BROTHER KICHAKA WAS KILLED. YOU WILL GET A DEATH SENTENCE.
FIVE VIRTUOUS GANDHARVAS PROTECT ME. ONE WHO EVEN THINKS ILL OF ME WILL GET THE SAME.

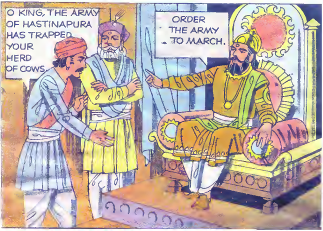

PRINCESS UTTARA, LET US START PRACTISING THE DANCE LESSONS.
NO, BRIHANNALA, THE MOURNING PERIOD OF MATERNAL UNCLE IS NOT YET OVER.

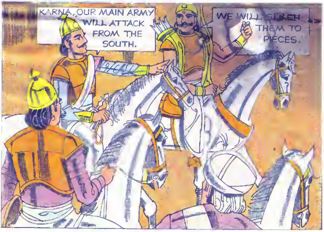

EAT TO YOUR FULL, ASHWAPALA, DHENUPALA.
WE'LL BURST OUT EATING YOUR MOUTH-WATERING RECIPIES.


OH LORD, SAIRANDHRI, SHOULD ALSO BE BURNT WITH THE PYRE OF BROTHER KICHAKA.
KICHAKA WILL BE CREMATED SECRETLY AT MIDNIGHT BY HIS BROTHERS. THAT TIME...

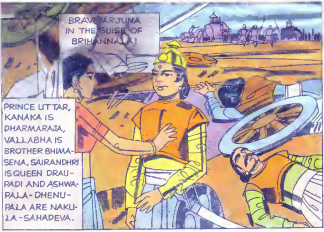

AT THE TIME OF SECRET CREMATION, BHIMA IN THE DISGUISE OF VALLABHA, RELEASED DRAUPADI, AND KILLING THE BROTHERS OF KICHAKA, BURNT THEM WITH HIS PYRE. BHIMA THEN TOOK DRAUPADI TO HER APARTMENT.


THE SPIES FEEL THAT IT WAS BHIMA WHO KILLED KICHAKA.
THEN WE MUST IMMEDIATELY ATTACK VIRATA
GREAT GRANDFATHER, WHEN WILL THIS MIDNIGHT BE OVER ?
DEAR SON, IT ISN'T VERY LONG NOW.


O KING, THE ARMY OF HASTINAPURA HAS TRAPPED YOUR HERD OF COWS.
ORDER THE ARMY TO MARCH.

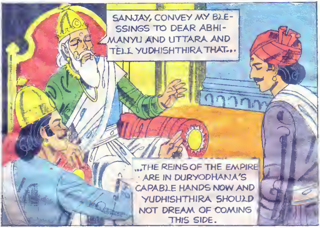

KARNA, OUR MAIN ARMY WILL ATTACK FROM THE SOUTH.
WE WILL SLASH THEM TO PIECES.

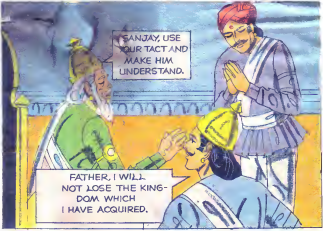

BUT IT WAS NOT SO. WITH THE HELP OF BHIMA, DISGUISED AS VALLABHA, THE FORCES OF VIRATA TRIUMPHED.
VALLABHA, IT WAS MAINLY DUE TO YOUR ASSISTANCE THAT WE WON THE BATTLE. HOW SHOULD I REWARD YOU?
KING VIRATA, I WANT TO ADOPT THIS BRAVE PRISONER AS MY SON.

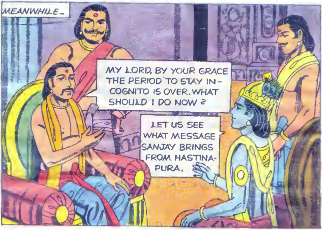

BRAVE ARJUNA IN THE GUISE OF BRIHANNALA!
PRINCE UTTAR, KANAKA IS DHARMARAJA, VALLABHA IS BROTHER BHIMA-SENA, SAIRANDHRI IS QUEEN DRAU-PADI AND ASHWA-PALA - DHENU-PALA ARE NAKU-LA - SAHADEVA.

KING VIRATA REPENTED WHEN HE CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE REAL IDENTITY OF THE DISGUISED PANDAVAS AND DRAUPADI, FOR HAVING MADE THEM TOIL HARD FOR HIM. HE WAS THANKFUL TO BHIMASENA AND ARJUNA FOR THE VICTORY. BHIMASENA HAD ALREADY ASKED PRISONER ABHIMANYU AS HIS SON. VIRATA OFFERED HIS DAUGHTER UTTARA IN MARRIAGE TO ARJUNA BUT AS HE LOOKED UPON HER AS A DAUGHTER, HE DID ACCEPT HER BUT AS HIS SON ABHIMANYU'S BRIDE.



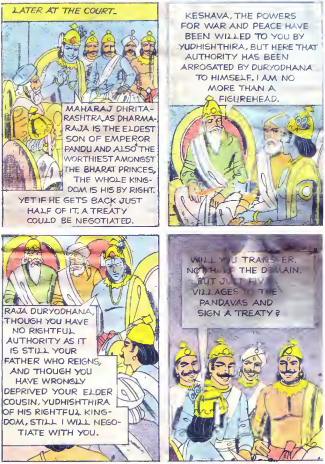

SANJAY, CONVEY MY BLESSINGS TO DEAR ABHIMANYU AND UTTARA AND TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT...
...THE REINS OF THE EMPIRE ARE IN DURYODHANA'S CAPABLE HANDS NOW AND YUDHISHTHIRA SHOULD NOT DREAM OF COMING THIS SIDE.

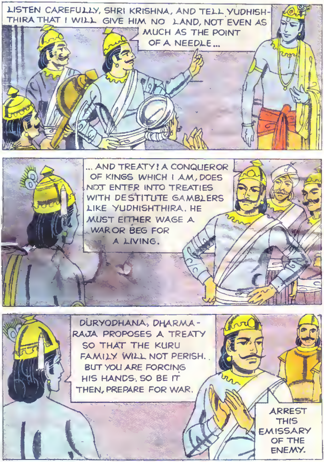

SANJAY, USE YOUR TACT AND MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND.
FATHER, I WILL NOT LOSE THE KINGDOM WHICH I HAVE ACQUIRED.


MEANWHILE_
MY LORD, BY YOUR GRACE THE PERIOD TO STAY IN-COGNITO IS OVER. WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW ?
LET US SEE WHAT MESSAGE SANJAY BRINGS FROM HASTINA-PURA.


HAIL O, DHARMARAJA. THE KING BLESSES YOU AND ADVISES YOU NOT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE POLITICS OF THE KINGDOM.
SANJAY, YOUR WORDS HAVE LEFT HIM DUMBFOUNDED. BUT IN MY OPINION THERE ARE ONLY TWO ALTER-NATIVES_EITHER COMPRO-MISE OR WAR. BUT MY FIRST PREFERENCE IS COMPROMISE.


DHARMARAJA PLEADED-
KESHAVA, GIVEN FIVE VILLAGES, I WILL MAKE PEACE. DO TRY AND SAVE THE PROGENY OF BHARAT FROM A CIVIL WAR.
I WILL PERSONALLY GO ... OUR EMISSARY AND I WILL DO WHATEVER IS RIGHT.
SANJAY RETURNS-
WELL, SANJAY, HOW DID DHARMARAJA RESPOND?
SHRI KRISHNA IS HIMSELF COMING AS HIS EMISSARY.
... WENT TO SEE DHRITA-
MAHARA... SHRI KRISHNA IS COMING ... THE REPRESENTATIVE OF DHARMARAJA. HIS MISSION HAS TO SUCCEED.
TO BHISHMA AND DRONACHARYA THE FUTURE LOOKED BLEAK.
BHISHMA, WHY IS DURYODHANA BENT ON DESTROYING THE BHARAT DYNASTY?


LATER AT THE COURT...
MAHARAJ DHRITARASHTRA, AS DHARMARAJA IS THE ELDEST SON OF EMPEROR PANDU AND ALSO THE WORTHIEST AMONGST THE BHARAT PRINCES, THE WHOLE KINGDOM IS HIS BY RIGHT.
YET IF HE GETS BACK JUST HALF OF IT, A TREATY COULD BE NEGOTIATED.
KESHAVA, THE POWERS FOR WAR AND PEACE HAVE BEEN WILLED TO YOU BY YUDHISHTHIRA, BUT HERE THAT AUTHORITY HAS BEEN ARROGATED BY DURYODHANA TO HIMSELF. I AM NO MORE THAN A FIGUREHEAD.
RAJA DURYODHANA, THOUGH YOU HAVE NO RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY AS IT IS STILL YOUR FATHER WHO REIGNS,
AND THOUGH YOU HAVE WRONGLY DEPRIVED YOUR ELDER COUSIN, YUDHISHTHIRA OF HIS RIGHTFUL KINGDOM, STILL I WILL NEGOTIATE WITH YOU.
WILL YOU TRANSFER, NOT HALF THE DOMAIN, BUT JUST FIVE VILLAGES TO THE PANDAVAS AND SIGN A TREATY?


LISTEN CAREFULLY, SHRI KRISHNA, AND TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT I WILL GIVE HIM NO LAND, NOT EVEN AS MUCH AS THE POINT OF A NEEDLE...
... AND TREATY! A CONQUEROR OF KINGS WHICH I AM, DOES NOT ENTER INTO TREATIES WITH DESTITUTE GAMBLERS LIKE YUDHISHTHIRA. HE MUST EITHER WAGE A WAR OR BEG FOR A LIVING.
DURYODHANA, DHARMARAJA PROPOSES A TREATY SO THAT THE KURU FAMILY WILL NOT PERISH. BUT YOU ARE FORCING HIS HANDS. SO BE IT THEN, PREPARE FOR WAR.
ARREST THIS EMISSARY OF THE ENEMY.


REALLY! WHO WOULD DARE TO DO SO? FALSE PRIDE AND CUPIDITY MUST BRING THIS COURT TO A SORRY END.

Thanks to Ajay Mishra for this issue's Cover scan

